

## CURRITUCK JOE.

The coast of North Carolina is not an inviting one. From their earliest acquaintance with it sailors have shunned Cape Hatteras, and many a raneboding shake of the head accompanies the words with which they speak of that stormy point. The loom of its sinister clouds is the signal to put close reefs in the topsails, and the skipper whose vessel has drifted too near its desolate shore pines his deck, with keen eyes scanning the western horizon, all through the long and storm-filled hours of the night.

And the winds have a different tone when they surge along the waves that roll foam-crowned and furious against its shifting sand dunes. There is an exaltation, a victorious shouting, in their rush, that seems to tell of a supreme sovereignty.

North of Hatteras, and running southward from the border of Virginia, is Currituck sound, a respectable sheet of water, separated from the ocean by a narrow belt of sand, as defends the entire seaboard of North Carolina. This immense sea-bar for it can be called nothing less—is not an inviting place of residence, and when the heavy north-east gales come roaring down the coast, there is a wildness and gloom pervading it that is anything but cheerful. Wrecks are frequent during the winter and early spring, when the great gales are most prevalent, and then the men at the government life-saving stations have wet and stormy work to do. The sullen boom of a gun will bring them forth to meet the rush and sting of chilling sleet, when night's darkness lies so heavy on the earth that sight is impossible.

Currituck bar has long been a favorite resort of mine, more from a sentimental memory, perhaps, than from its actual pleasures. Still, I find in its wildness, and in the peculiar, seemingly wreck-haunted atmosphere that is its heritage, an antidote for the toil of a life that has seen but few other changes besides the annual visits to its barren wastes during the season when gulls were to be found along its shores. My journeys began quite a number of years ago, before the life saving service had planted its stations along the tempest-swept beach, and were inaugurated by one of these apparently unimportant occurrences that pass and are forgotten, until an epoch in one's existence brings them out with startling vividness.

I was roaming through the market at Norfolk, having been called there by business, which, while giving me many spare hours, still necessitated a stay of several days, when I saw some fine ducks exposed for sale, veritable canvas backs, and plump as partridges fresh from a backwater stubble. As I was about to start home the next morning, a desire to become the owner of some of these took possession of me, which their owner was quick to perceive.

"Better take a pair or two of 'em; they're right good, young and fat and tender," he said, looking up at me with eyes so full of kindness, and yet so woful with sorrow, that I was startled and did not answer immediately.

"They're fresh as a nor'east gale on Currituck," he went on; "I know it, for I shot 'em myself."

"Where?" I questioned, eager to know something of the owner of such strange eyes.

"Down on Currituck."

"Is that so?"

"The man appeared to be a little surprised to find that a person existed so ignorant as not to know that famous locality, and then he gave me the desired information."

"It's in North Carolina, just out of Virginia, and is one of the coast sand bars."

"Is the game plentiful?"

"If you mean ducks, yes."

"Do you live there?"

"Yes, I only come to Norfolk once or twice a year, to stock up. I'm not a truckster; I couldn't be."

A few more questions elicited the knowledge of how to get to the favored land, and then I purchased the entire lot of his ducks, giving him full price to his surprise and gratification, his full price.

As I turned away with my prize he said:

"If you ever come down that way and want some good duck shooting, just ask for Currituck Joe. All the fellows as paddle down that way know me."

I thanked him, and having hired a colored boy to carry my purchase, went back to my hotel.

It was two years after my visit to Norfolk, when one morning the telegraph brought word that a ship belonging to our house had gone to pieces just south of Currituck light.

"Some one will have to go down there and gather all the news there is to be found out," said the senior partner, and I immediately volunteered; for at the sound of the name, there came before me the gleam of the piteous eyes, and the echo of words that gradually grew distinct as "Currituck Joe."

I arrived at Norfolk two days after the word had passed on a small steamer plying in the waters I wished to visit.

We came to the place where the first drift from the wreck lay, and found a mass of planking, torn and broken, and strangely emptying the supposed power held by the writhing of wind and wave, when brought into contention with the work of man. Further on along the beach were piled boxes and bales, carefully covered by fragments of the deck and bulwarks.

As we neared one of these, a figure, roughly clad in a brown tarpaulin suit, rose from a sitting posture beneath a rudely formed tent of rent canvas, and I saw before me the man I had met in the market at Norfolk two years previous.

"There's Currituck Joe," said my guide. "He's been looking out for the goods."

The man approached, walking with a curious, shuffling gait, as though deprecating any adverse criticism that his appearance might arouse.

"Good mornin'," he said, bowing awkwardly.

"Good morning, Joe," I answered, extending my hand.

He took it hesitatingly, but my strong grip seemed to reassure him, and I thought that he straightened up as he felt it.

"Be you one of the insurance men?" he asked.

"No, the ship belonged to our house, and the cargo was consigned to us."

"There's not much of it left for anybody," said Joe.

"I see that there is but little; where are the men that were saved?"

"Gone north. There was only three; the rest got washed away by a sea just as the ship struck."

"How were the three saved?"

"Oh, a boat put out to sea, as soon as there was light enough to show they were left."

With a natural modesty, Joe refrained from saying that he was the man who spurred the boat's crew into action, and led them in their successful struggle to rescue the three lives.

Having no special call to hurry back to New York, I wrote a letter to the firm, giving them the information needed to give them regarding the insurance, and dispatching this to the nearest postoffice by the boat that had brought me to the bar, accepted Joe's invitation and spent the next week with him. We had a short gale the next night after our arrival, but Joe called it a baby affair and as the sun shone out the next day and the sea was so good I thought he must be right.

And indeed, across the bar in the early watches of the night, sending great masses of sand sweeping in from the sea and far out on the sound was as fierce as any I had ever heard.

When I left the bar Joe pressed me to visit him again next year.

After my return to Norfolk I sent him a box full of papers, tobacco and fishing and hunting stuff I had found out he would like, adding a large can of whisky, a beverage he used when a storm had wet him to the skin and chilled his blood, and only at that time, and shortly after my arrival home received a simple, but whole-souled letter of thanks.

The first day of the next December found me in Norfolk on my way to Currituck, and I reached Joe's hut one evening just as the sun sank in a glory of amber and pink that made the sound look like a vast sheet of dormant flame.

Joe was away, but the door was open, and having stowed my traps and some boxes I had brought for him, I threw a lot of drift-wood on the smoldering embers, and soon had a glowing fire, lighting the rudely furnished room in whose corners the gathering twilight had made deep shadows.

Joe came in shortly after the fire had got well under way and gave me a cordial greeting, and a very favorable report as to the prospects for a good two weeks' sport. We were out early the next morning, and for five days had excellent weather and fine shooting, but the morning of the sixth day brought a change. The sky was covered with a thin gray vapor, and the sun shone in this like a great red ball. Gradually the grayness grew deeper, and the vapor thickened to vast masses of cloud.

Then the sun changed its hue to a dull yellow, and slowly faded out from sight, and it disappeared the low mounds in their gray woeberly intensity.

"There'll be a hard blow," Joe had said in the early morning, and after eating our breakfast we strolled over toward the seaward beach.

Joe's hut was sheltered by a collection of sand dunes, among which its low roof rose like a sharper point. It stood midway between the ocean and the sound, and a short walk was all that was needed to reach either.

When we came to the beach the waves were rolling up its changing sands with a regular monotony that seemed utterly devoid of fierceness, but soon a wild, sobbing murmur sounded across the wide eastern expanse, and they grew more restless, and began to toss little foam-crowned crests against each other. The day during its first part was a changing dreariness. The somber hue of the sea, and the storm sounds in the air, deepened, and the great waves darkened, as the gloom above them assumed a density that soon was sooty oppressive. Occasional puffs ruffled the water, and these quickly grew heavier and more frequent.

Then Joe, who had clambered to the top of a sand dune, cried: "There she comes," and hastening to his side, I saw what seemed a huge wall of white foam rushing shoreward.

Then some sharply driven rain drops struck hard on our faces, and with a roar, the first great gust of the gale surged past us, and the foam-crowned waves rolled thundering up the beach.

We found shelter in a low shed made of wreck drift, and there watched the sea. It was a grand and wild sight, that tumult of water with the wind surging over it, and there was a fascination in it that must be felt to be known. As we stood watching this tempest-painted picture, a man came swiftly down the beach, the wind driving him before it. He made for our shelter, and as soon as he could regain the speech that the gale had deprived him of, said:

"There's a schooner trying to draw off shore above us, but I don't think she can weather the point yonder."

Joe sprang toward the beach.

"There were several men in the shed, and one asked:

"Do you know the vessel?"

"Yes," it was Mark Ward's schooner. I know her by the yellow square on her quarter."

I noticed that though turned their glances toward Joe, and that his face grew peculiarly hard and white; but it was only for a moment, and then it assumed the old look, only a strength and firmness came to the eyes that made them burn with a strange brilliancy. He seemed more erect, too, as he grasped a line that hung against the wall of the shed, and there was a tone of command in his voice, as he said:

"Come boys, we have no time to lose," and went out, and down the beach, battling with the wind that almost took him off his feet.

We followed, and soon reached a low building, in which the men who were Joe's companions, and he kept a small but servicable lifeboat. It was where a short point jutted out just inside of a large headland, and formed a shelter, partially protected bay. The wind was from the northeast, and as this point reached out toward the southward, it had a narrow belt of comparatively smooth water bordering its leeward face. The boat was run close to this, and the men, lying down under the lee of the sand dunes, watched the vessel to the northward, as she made desperate fight for an offing.

"She can't reach out beyond the point," said one, "for she can't carry sail enough."

The schooner was under short canvas, having close reefs in all her sails; and still the wind seemed to bury her in spray, as it drove her down toward the sand. To spread more sail was impossible, as that already set was strained to its utmost capacity, and a larger surface would bring upon it more power than it could bear.

"No, sir, she can't reach out beyond the point," said the eldest man of the group, "and it shocks fearfully there. I don't think there is much chance for either vessel or crew."

Again the men turned toward Joe with the strange look I had before noticed, but he made no sign.

All this time the schooner had been drawing nearer, driven on by the cruel gale, and signals for help were now flung out, showing that her crew had given up all hope of reaching the open water beyond the point.

Joe, seeing this, removed his waterproof suit and stepped into the boat. A coil of small line lay in the stern, and end run through a fair-lead. This end he passed to the men on shore, and then sat down and grasped an oar. As he did so his companions seized the boat and gave her a shove into the water, three of them springing in with Joe. Then, with strong, steady strokes, they bent to their work and the boat shot forward just as a loud, despairing hail came sounding in from the wind.

We looked seaward and saw that the schooner had grounded and was lying broadside to the waves, which were rolling on board of her in huge masses. Their force was terrific, and they soon drove her stern around, each blow making her masts tremble like reeds. This new position was an easier one for the vessel, but the men said that she would not last long, as the seas were growing and the wind still kept rising. We saw her men clinging to the rigging, but our main interest was centered in the boat, which was making slow progress out toward her. It was a hard battle and a desperate one, for the waves came rolling in, heavy and foaming, and the wind roared along, tossing their swirling crests far up the sand.

But Joe and his companions were stout and hardy, and had seen too much of a life

position, and slowly they neared the ground. Often, however, it looked as though they would be flung back, and at other times we lost sight of the boat and thought her seaward. Then she would appear once more, and keep on toward her goal. The schooner made a lee of smooth water, and after a half hour of work that seemed more than human, the boat ran into the lee, and we sent her a cheer of hope, but it was too soon, for the next instant a huge wave swept over the vessel's bow, and, coming over her side, caught the foremast and flung it on the deck.

We saw some struggling forms, but could distinguish nothing, for the sprays were driving between the masts, enveloping the men as in a mist. We also saw that they were getting the small line clear, and soon a signal told us to haul it ashore. We did so, bringing a stout tow-line, which we could see the men make fast to the schooner's mainmast as soon as we had the end secured to a heavy spike sunk in the sand. Then we saw them working at the lifeboat, and in a little time she was launched, and a limp form passed carefully into her.

The men then pulled slowly toward the shore by the line, a dangerous undertaking, as the wind made the sea heavily loaded boat surge fearfully, and the waves bore down on her as though they would sweep her from sight. But she battled on, and in a short time, though it seemed ages to us, reached the smoother water under the lee of the smaller point and was soon drawn well up on the beach.

We gathered round the boat and I was shocked to see, lying in the stern sheets, the pale, still face of Currituck Joe. A ghastly cut on his head was oozing blood, and there was the unmistakable sign of death's nearness about him, which sent a chill to my heart. The presence of life even now was only discernible by a slight twitching of the lips, the evidence, as I knew, of intense suffering.

"Fling against her mast," said one of the boat's crew, in answer to an inquiry. "I know he would give his life away for some one, but didn't think it would be for Mark Ward."

A stout man was standing near by looking at Joe's white face with tear-wet eyes. His breast was heaving, showing that his heart was throbbing fiercely, and when he heard the words, he said:

"I am sorry, boys; I wish it was me lying there instead of Joe."

Though curious to know the meaning of these, to me, strange words, I felt that Joe should be attended to, and had him carried to his home.

"Can you get a doctor?" I questioned.

"There's none on the bar, and no one on the mainland would cross the sound to-day," was the answer.

Joe was already passing beyond the need of any man's care. As I bent over him, where he lay in his rude bunk, his eyes opened, and a look of intelligence came into them.

"Is he safe?" he whispered.

"Yes," I answered.

"Then it's all right. Tell him I say it's all right."

His hand tightened its clasp on mine, as I said I would attend to his wish. Then a bright smile lit up the brown face, and gleamed in the eyes, driving from them the sorrow I had seen there, and the next moment this sorrow had faded in the glow of a grander life.

The storm was raging fearfully, the wind shaking the rude hut with a force that seemed equal to its destruction; but it stood firm and I watched by the dead, sorrowing for the loss of a true friend.

The men had returned to the beach, to gather the wreckage that might drift ashore, and it was late when the man who seemed to take the lead, now that Joe was gone, looked in.

I told him that his comrade was at rest, and asked him to send for a coffin.

"That can't be done till the morning," he said, "and I might as well help you watch. I'll tell the boys, for they're mighty anxious. It's a sad day for us, sir, for Joe was the best man on the beach. I'll be back soon," and he went away.

He returned in a short time, and after getting the fire in order, he prepared some supper, of which we partook, and then sat down by the glowing blaze for the wind was raw and chill, and sent its currents through every crack and crevice.

"What do you think links Joe's past to the life of the schooner's skipper?" I asked.

"They were neighbors and schoolmates over beyond the sound," answered the man, "and both likely young fellows when we were came. Joe had begun studying law, and Ward went to sea with his father, the captain of a coaster. Well, they both enlisted, and Joe was taken prisoner. Ward knew of this, and came home wounded. It is said that Joe and he were both after the same girl, but the story is that she favored Joe. Well, when Ward reached home, he gave out that Joe was dead, and then made up to the girl. She mourned for Joe six months or more, but you know, a young nature will throw off grief, and Ward was very attentive and sympathetic, and consoling, and the result was that she promised to have him."

"Let me get that back to you, saying that he wanted to go back to his regiment, for his wound was about well, and so they were married. The next week Joe got back, having been exchanged, and when he found that he had lost the girl he gave right up and came over here, and he has lived on the bar ever since."

"Ward said that he truly thought Joe was dead, but the folks all think that he trumped up the yarn just to get the girl; in fact, they know it, but they keep still for the woman's sake, as she is nice and a good neighbor."

"As for Joe, he had set his heart on her so that the loss just broke him all up, and he never went back to his old home again. He has lived on the bar ever since, carrying his fish and game across to a lander to sell and now and then running up to Norfolk. He never met Ward, who went coasting again as soon as the war was over, until he saw him to-day."

"We didn't think he would go out to help, but Joe was true grit. He has saved lots of people, and it does seem too bad that he should meet his death while rescuing the men who blasted his life."

But so it was; and two days after that we buried him in a grave made among the sand dunes, in whose company he had passed so many lonely years. It was his wish that no stone nor sign should mark the place, and we held his wish sacred.

"Let the winds sing free above me, and the sun shine across the place," he had said, when talking of this time, in the days when we had thought it a long way off; and there, with the surf roar sounding over his unmarked grave, Currituck Joe sleeps in peace; the sorrow that wrecked his life and love forgotten.—Thomas S. Collier in Overland Monthly.

A Big Load of Saw-Logs

The biggest load of saw-logs ever hauled over a road in Washington territory recently arrived at Seattle. These were eighteen logs ranging from 24 to 120 feet in length. The longest ones are intended for vessels, masts, and one has a diameter of thirty-six inches and another forty-eight inches in the middle. The latter contains 13,000 feet of lumber, and the total measurement is about 1,200,000 feet. Their gross weight is about 4,000 tons, and they are to be shipped to the Pacific coast.—The Seattle Tribune.

## MISSION OF THE SPIRIT.

DR. JOHN HALL'S NOTES ON THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

Lesson XI of the International Series for Sunday, Sept. 13—Golden Text: "He Will Guide You Into All Truth."—John XVI, 5-20.

We have the New Testament and the history of the Christian Church, but we must remember the disciples had not. They had given up all for Christ. To find him gone, themselves alone and hated because of him (vs. 1, 2) might well make them doubt all he had taught them, or stumble. Hence our lesson was taught them (v. 1, Revision), that "ye should not be troubled." It is on the other hand that they would only remember and understand his words they would be all the stronger. "This is just what he told us; he is the faithful witness," they would say. So he says (v. 4, these things have I etc., but how could they be made to remember and understand? The answer to that question we are now to get, and it is to be studied in the light of these facts. Let us put ourselves in the place of this little company and try to imagine their feelings, and we shall the better see the meaning.

I. Their situation (vs. 5-7). Jesus was going his way to him that sent him. He came from God and went to God. He was to go back when his work on earth was done, and it was soon to be "finished." "None of you," says he, "asks me, 'Whither goest thou?'" This seems to contradict John xiii, 36, but only "seems." Remembering that the question of that passage is seen that Peter was speaking of some place on earth, in Judea, to which he thought Jesus going. But Jesus is speaking now of going from earth and to be glorified in heaven, and none of them took in the idea clearly enough to ask about his destination and work when he left the earth. His meaning is, "You do not take in the great crisis, and what I am to do after going away." They were not naturally dwelling with error on their loss, and not thinking of the great gain that would come from His glorification in other forms. They were in this just what we are. God takes away known blessings, and we are filled with sorrow and brood on our loss, when we should think of what we shall gain. In other ways through the loss, in grace, in experience and in fresh forms of help from God's hand.

He is telling them the truth: It was "expedient," fit, proper, a part of the divine plan, a necessary part, that He should go away. Why "expedient?" (1) He was to sit at God's right hand (Ps. ex, 1). (2) His ascension was to be the proof of God's being satisfied with His work (Acts ii, 36, 37). (3) The divine order was, first let law be satisfied, then this great gift of the Spirit may be given to "even the rebellions" (Ch. xviii, 18). (4) It is needful that the church, the believers, should walk by faith, not by sight. No. 3 is the great reason Christ here dwells upon. "If I depart, I will send Him unto you." How much they needed to have all this made plain the latter history shows. They counted all an end when they saw Him buried. You do not find one of them saying, "Now, brethren, let us look for the Comforter," till Jesus came and told them what to do. (See Luke xxiv, 49, and Acts i, 4, 5.)

II. What the Comforter was to do (vs. 8-15). The word in Greek is that which we make Paraclete. It may mean also advocate. It represents one who explains, vindicates and soothes grief. Hence the word "revolver," or as it is better in the revision, "convict." The word, i. e., the men and women now in the world, that is, not in Christ, not believing, have to be convicted of sin. So it is with all men naturally. "I am not a sinner; I am as good as others; there is an excuse for my little wrong thing I did; I can make all right and turn round when please." So they reason. They only say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," when the spirit has shown them God's law, character, claims and their own baseness. Especially v. 19 have such to be shown their sin. This is to all who hear the gospel the sin of sins. Christ was the great sinner of the Jews, Christ was rejected. But when sensible of sin the question is, What can we do? How can we get righteousness? And the first idea is, work it out. Stop sinning. Watch yourself. Do good. And, so influenced, men often go on and say, work righteousness by punishing yourself. First, go without sleep, clothes, homes, live in caves and dens, go into monasteries, and so lay up righteousness. But the Spirit shows that that is not the kind of righteousness needed. It is not perfect; it is not righteousness at all, and even if it were, it is needed for the present, and does not count the past. The Spirit shows that the righteousness—which is perfect—is Christ's, done and finished on the earth. That is the meaning of v. 10, which explains what is said in v. 8.

But one may say, How can this righteousness of another, do us any good? That is where "judgment" comes in. He is not speaking of the great and general judgment. See the Revision on v. 11. It is a thing then past, i. e., when the Comforter is doing his work, "the prince of this world hath been judged." But it thus: Satan could say of men, "They belong to me, they sin, they are my servants, not God's. They have no claim to heaven. They are to be with me." His case was good so far. They were debtors, criminals, and justice demanded punishment. But Jesus came, paid the debt, bore the guilt and destroyed this plea, secured "judgment" against Satan. So God is "just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth." This is the substance of the gospel system, and men need the Holy Ghost to convict them of all this. Hence the need of prayer for the Holy Spirit. It is a remarkable thing that the bitterest foes of Christianity own the personal goodness, righteousness of Jesus.

When (v. 12), he says, "I have many, many, but ye cannot bear them now," he is not speaking of more trouble on them, but of their inability to understand him then. The history of the disciples after his death, and before the Spirit came shows the truth of that. But

(V. 13) they would be guided into all truth; the Spirit would not speak of himself. He is a person, a divine person; but as in the plan of salvation Jesus forgets self for us, so the Holy Spirit leaves much about himself and about his ways of working (John iii, 8) in mystery, that he may reveal the things of Christ and show things to come, their duty, their position, their privileges and their prospects.

So (v. 14) He glorifies Christ, makes men understand His real dignity and honor and mighty saving work. Then they see that He is not only a matchless teacher and a holy man, not only rounding mind and giving men a new ideal, but saving them by satisfying law, making atonement, taking the place of Satan's mouth, and enabling saints to say, "Who is He that condemneth?" (Rom. viii, 34). And this is not honoring the Son too much, and forgetting God the Father as it were, for (v. 15) "all things that the Father hath," etc. (Could any more creature say this truly?)

III. Their perplexity. Jesus said, "Ye cannot bear," etc., v. 12. Here we see that without meaning it. Now we see what

Peter did not in xiii, 36, that he is not speaking of going somewhere else on earth, but of going to the Father in a "little while." He tells them as much as they can bear. It will be sorrow in the first instance, and "the world will rejoice" men will think, "now we have got rid of this trouble," but joy afterwards; darkness first, but light afterwards. We shall see the meaning of this as we proceed with the history of the crucifixion, the resurrection and ascension, and the scenes of Pentecost.

From this lesson we may see:

- (1) How show man is to learn spiritual things, and hence we need "true open life," books, lessons, teachers, classes, sermons, afflictions and with and after all the Holy Spirit. How sin has blinded the mind and darkened the heart! (Eph. i, 1.)
- (2) How complete is the provision God has made for man! The Son stands for us; dies for us. But man does not understand, and so the Spirit—the Comforter—is given.
- (3) We see why "we preach Christ." God the Father speaks in his works and in men's conscience and Christ is his image. The best way to make men know the Father is to preach Christ. Nor do we preach the Holy Ghost. The best way to lead men to seek him is to let up Christ. He sends this gift, and the Spirit in turn bears witness to him.
- (4) So the way of life gives honor to the three persons in the one God. God gives the Son; the Son humbles himself and dies in our nature; the Holy Ghost, given from the Father and the Son, reveals him and his fullness to men. So all believers will give glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.—The Sunday School World.

Excursion to Northwestern Iowa. The Illinois Central Railroad will run one Grand Harvest Excursion to Storm Lake, Cherokee and Le Mars, Iowa, leaving La Salle at 11:45 A. M., Tuesday, September 29. Round trip rates from La Salle as follows: To Storm Lake and Cherokee, \$11.00; Le Mars, \$12.00. Tickets good to return on any regular train within 30 days from date of sale. Stop over granted at points west of, and including, Iowa Falls. A splendid opportunity to visit friends in Northern Iowa, Northern Nebraska, and Southern Minnesota and Dakota. For sleeping car accommodations apply to the undersigned, on or before September 25th. J. F. MERRY, Gen'l West. Pass. Agent.

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